

# A spark of technology inspires students at an Arizona school district

*Sunnyside Unified School District #12 in Tucson provides students with a "Digital Advantage"*



**MANASSAS, VA (2011)** – For many students, the introduction to new technologies is a sought after experience, and often times, can be considered a segue to future academic success.

Teachers and students across Sunnyside Unified School District in Tucson are quickly discovering the excitement of integrating computing technologies to the curriculum. Throughout the district, seven schools have EarthWalk High-Efficiency (HE) computer labs with over 2700 Lenovo laptops deployed in total, and more labs to be launched in the near future. These laptops are stored and powered by EarthWalk's MiniMax series mobile computer lab and maximize student user hours when paired with the SideKick PowerPack. Many of these students, whom never experienced personal ownership of a laptop before, show excitement and enthusiasm.

"I've seen the eyes of these students go wide open as their faces light up with excitement as they picked up the laptops. You notice that some of these students possess a genuine interest and a natural gift for technology." explained Javier Baca, Chief Technology Officer of the district. "In one classroom, one of the students is already emerging as the local classroom technician and going around helping his peers."



Mary Veres (Left) & Javier Baca (Right) from Sunnyside Unified School District in Tucson, AZ

Along with students, teachers also appreciate the features of the mobile computer lab system largely due to its organization, 1:1 accessibility, security, power, green-natured efficiency, and the A/C brick that allows kids to take the laptops home. "The teachers appreciate the carts in that they act as their charging stations" said Assistant Director of Technology Mary Veres. "They appreciate not having a lot of cables all over the place. Also, there is the security and safety factor."



Students at Sunnyside Unified School are provided with the one-to-one computing program; allowing students to take their laptop home with constant access to a wide array of applications and content. This program encourages students to broaden their learning experience and aids the development of vital computing skills. The requirements to obtain a computer and participate in the program are as followed: parents and students must both must undergo the process of earning digital license, where the participant will learn to use a computer and be rated on three levels of competency (Basic, Internet, and Software), along with essential knowledge of internet safety and basic care. This program follows the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines for fair technology use.

Javier and Mary hope that these programs will further facilitate interest in technology for the students and families of the school district. The overall objective is that the deployment of these labs will ensure accessibility to computers not otherwise possible, pique interest in the field of information technology, and

lead to higher student involvement and an increase in student retention within the Sunnyside District. By providing these students with the tools and power to innovate, the future is bright for the tech-savvy students at Sunnyside Unified School District.

“You can understand that for a lot of these students who have never had a computer, it’s an exciting thing”.

### **About the Sunnyside Unified School District’s “The Digital Advantage”**

The 5th-Grade one-to-one computing program will extend 1-to-1 computing by assigning a personal laptop computer to every fifth- and sixth-grader in the district’s schools next fall and will extend to seventh and eighth grades in the following year. In the high schools, the Sunnyside District has gained state and national attention for Project Graduation: The Digital Advantage’s impact on attendance, freshman promotion rates and especially high school graduation numbers. In 2009, a record high of 715 students graduated. A total of 821 students graduated in 2010, up from 715 in 2009 and 598 in 2008.

For more information on the Sunnyside Unified School District, visit <http://www.sunnysideud.k12.az.us>.

### **About EarthWalk Communication, Inc.**

For over a decade, EarthWalk has worked closely with primary and secondary school administrators and educators to identify solutions needed to help integrate technology into the classroom. As a result in these discussions, we were the first technology company to integrate wireless technology into the modern day netbook. We’ve also pioneered innovative solutions that continues to set us apart from other companies within the industry. The EarthWalk Mobile lab solution is designed and manufactured to address the needs of the education community. These technologies include a unique combination of wireless capabilities, customer and technical support, training and consulting services for use in any classroom environment. EarthWalk is proud to be recognized as a leading provider of classroom and rapid deployment solutions worldwide.

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